

Owyhee River-Deep Creek Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 72,720 acres

The Owyhee River-Deep Canyon WSA (ID-16-49A) is located in Owyhee County about 100 miles southwest of Boise, Idaho. The WSA includes 72,720 acres of BLM land and no nonfederal inholdings (see Table 1). It includes 2,560 acres acquired from the state in 1987.

Sixty-two percent of the WSA's 76-mile circumference is bounded by primitive dirt roads and fence lines. About 30 miles of boundary are along legal subdivisions of nonfederal land and along public lands judged not to have wilderness values. Eleven cherry-stem roads (8.5 miles) enter the WSA. The WSA's western boundary adjoins the Owyhee River Canyon WSA (ID-16-48B/OR-3-195) while the eastern boundary adjoins both the Battle Creek WSA (ID-111-49E) and Yatahoney Creek WSA (ID-16-49D).

The WSA consists of a flat to gently rolling sagebrush-, bitterbrush- and bunchgrass-covered plateau dissected by 13 miles of canyons 400 to 500 feet deep, including eight miles of the East Fork Owyhee River. Portions of the narrow, meandering canyons that are not sheer-walled are covered with sagebrush and bunchgrasses while the riparian area consists of narrow bands of lush grasses, rushes and sedges.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and was included in the Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement filed in October 1989. Five alternatives were analyzed in the EIS for this WSA: a partial wilderness alternative where 70,090 acres of BLM lands (including the 4,180 acres studied under the authority of Section 202 of FLPMA) would be designated as wilderness and 4,250 acres would be released for nonwilderness uses, which is the recommendation of this report; two additional partial wilderness alternatives where 19,240 and 58,090 acres would be designated as wilderness, and 43,480 and 15,310 acres, respectively, would be released for nonwilderness uses; an all wilderness alternative; and a no wilderness alternative where about 9,300 acres would be included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Systems as a portion of a larger wild river area.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

**70,090 acres recommended for
wilderness**

**4,250 acres recommended for
nonwilderness**

The recommendation for the Owyhee River-Deep Creek WSA is to designate 70,090 acres as wilderness and release 4,250 acres for other uses. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The recommendation would use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts.

The 70,090 acres recommended for wilderness are shown as the nonshaded area on the Owyhee River-Deep Creek Proposal map. This recommendation would further apply to 160 acres of private lands adjacent to the WSA if acquired through purchase or exchange with willing owners. Appendix I lists all nonfederal lands within the area recommended for wilderness and provides additional information on acquisition of these lands.

The 70,090 acres recommended for wilderness designation would enhance the National Wilderness Preservation System by adding 55 miles of spectacularly scenic canyons and 51,630 acres of surrounding plateau. The area is natural in appearance, has outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation and offers significant special features. The area is manageable to protect wilderness characteristics with a minimum of resource conflicts. The 70,090 acres recommended for designation are part of a proposed 385,080 acre Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness which would include about 270 miles of desert canyon, 164 miles of whitewater boating opportunities and 292,640 acres of plateau.

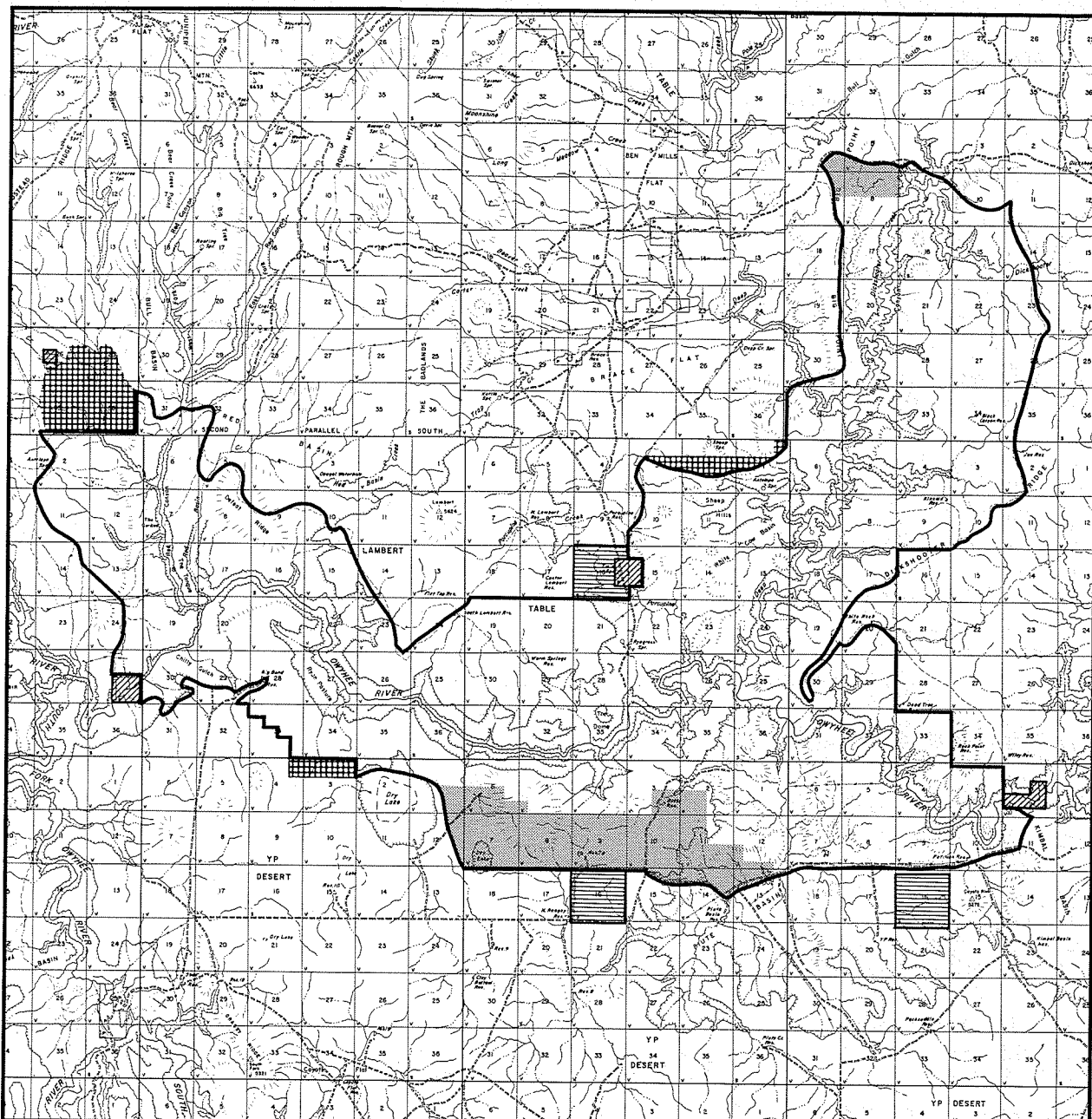
The 1,620 acres of BLM land adjacent to the WSA were added to the area recommended for wilderness designation because they have wilderness values and would provide a more definable wilderness boundary. The adjusted boundary would improve the management configuration of the wilderness recommendation. A portion of this acreage, 780 acres, was acquired from the State of Idaho in 1987 after the area was designated as a WSA.

The 4,250 acres of BLM land recommended for other use are shown as Areas A and B on the Owyhee River-Deep Creek WSA map. This land is not recommended for wilderness designation for the following reasons:

AREA A: Dickshooter - 810 acres of plateau along the northern tip of the WSA contains an improved road and two livestock water reservoirs. The area has lower naturalness and primitive recreation values compared to the area recommended for wilderness designation.







AREA B: "YP" Desert/Paiute Creek - 3,440 acres of plateau along the south central boundary of the WSA has lower wilderness values for naturalness and primitive recreation compared to the area recommended for wilderness designation. The area contains four cherry-stem roads and four livestock water reservoirs.

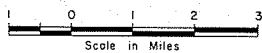
Releasing Areas A and B for uses other than wilderness would allow for a 125 AUM increase in livestock grazing.



T. 11 S.
T. 12 S.
T. 12 S.
T. 13 S.
T. 13 S.
T. 14 S.
T. 14 S.
T. 15 S.

R. 5 W. | R. 4 W. R. 4 W. | R. 3 W. R. 3 W. | R. 2 W.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  SPLIT ESTATE |
|  RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |  STATE |
|  LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  PRIVATE |



ID-16-49A
OWYHEE RIVER— DEEP CREEK
PROPOSAL

DECEMBER 1988

**Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
OWYHEE RIVER-DEEP CREEK WSA**

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	72,720
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
Total	72,720

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	68,470
BLM (outside WSA)	2,400
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	70,090
Inholdings (state, private) ¹	160
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	4,250
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	4,250
Inholdings (state, private)	0

¹Appendix I is a detailed description of inholdings included within the area recommended for designation.

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Owyhee River-Deep Creek WSA consists of a plateau dissected by 55 miles of deep canyons. The WSA is predominantly natural with less than six percent impacted by human imprints. The widely dispersed imprints include 26 small livestock water reservoirs, a developed spring, 8.5 miles of cherry-stem roads, 11.5 miles of ways (vehicle tracks) and fences.

In the canyons of the WSA, impacts are lacking except for some ruins of historic buildings. Portions of the WSA boundary roads can be seen from small areas of canyon.

B. Solitude

The WSA's outstanding opportunities for solitude are attributed to the isolated, intimate seclusion of canyonlands and the vastness of desert plateau lands and distant mountain ranges.

The meandering character of the canyons and water courses provides excellent topographic screening between visitor groups traveling close together. The depth of the canyons combined with limited viewing distances creates a tremendous sense of seclusion. The length of canyons allows visitors to easily find campsites which are away from others and to adjust their rates of travel to avoid interaction with other groups while floating or hiking.

From many high points on the plateau, hundreds to thousands of square miles of open spaces can be seen stretching from Steens Mountain in Oregon to Juniper Mountain in Idaho and southward to the Bull Run Mountains of Nevada. These vast open spaces instill a sense of separation from civilization.

Solitude is sometimes disrupted by military aircraft. The southwest corner of Idaho is a military operations area (MOA) for training military pilots in low elevation, subsonic flight in mostly fighter-bomber type aircraft. Flights occur over different patterns at elevations as low as 100 feet above the plateau. Due to the variation in flight patterns and schedules over this large area, impacts upon the solitude vary greatly. At times, jets can be seen and/or heard flying all day. Other times, one can travel for several days and not see or hear aircraft.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The natural features also contribute to outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation found in the WSA. The scenic natural features and diversity of rugged landforms attract people interested in hunting, backpacking and river running as well as secondary activities of sightseeing, outdoor photography, wildlife viewing, botanical studies and fishing. River running opportunities are of exceptionally high quality and considered nationally significant.

The miles of canyons, their diversely and severely eroded rock landscapes and their steep slopes create a sense of solitude, thereby enhancing the primitive recreation experience. Visitors traveling in or near the canyons are constantly aware of the forces of nature.

The challenge and excitement of whitewater rapids as well as several mandatory portages of waterfalls add to the boating experience. Hiking the rugged canyons and plateau without the aid of established trails provides a natural and arduous recreational challenge which heightens the primitive experience.

The numerous talus slopes of the canyons encourage travel both near the river and on the plateau. Recreational use of the plateau would concentrate near the canyon rims. These rimrock areas often offer less arduous hiking conditions than those in the canyons and provide opportunities for spectacular vistas of the canyons below. The area of use on the plateau is likely to be fairly wide due to the meandering character of the canyon rimrock and major side drainages. The canyon system can be seen from many plateau areas. Hiking on the plateau also provides an opportunity to experience vast open spaces.

D. Special Features

The Owyhee River-Deep Creek WSA is rich in special features including scenic, scientific, wildlife and cultural values. The special features contribute significantly to the quality of the wilderness characteristics.

The canyons are of exceptionally high scenic quality. The combination of moving water, colorful sheer cliffs, grass-covered talus slopes and blue sky create a dramatic beauty. In places, reddish brown cliffs drop hundreds of feet to the water. These fractured, blocky rock monoliths are tinted with brilliant green, yellow and orange microflora. Near the base of the cliffs, water sometimes seeps from the fractures to nourish small, deep green plant communities. The monoliths are frequently topped with a multitude of diversely eroded spires. The sheer rock walls often give way to steep slopes covered with a mosaic of red rock rubble and subdued green and yellow sagebrush and grasses.

The Owyhee River is nationally known for its whitewater boating. The East Fork Owyhee River is a portion of a larger segment of river recommended to Congress for inclusion within the National Wild and Scenic River System (NWSRS). The Owyhee River, West Little Owyhee River and North Fork Owyhee River downstream from the WSA in Oregon have been designated as components of the NWSRS.

Sensitive wildlife species found in the WSA include California bighorn sheep, bobcat, river otter and redband trout. Of particular concern is the population of bighorn sheep, a species dependent upon wildlands habitat for their survival. California bighorn sheep were successfully reintroduced along the East Fork Owyhee River in the 1960s. An estimated 400 bighorns inhabit the Owyhee Canyonlands WSAs all year around. Sensitive plant species found in the WSA are *Erigeron latus* and *Hackelia upiobia*.

The WSA contains both historic and prehistoric archaeological sites. Historic sites include the ruins of buildings along the East Fork Owyhee River near the confluence of Deep Creek. Prehistoric sites are found within caves and rock shelters in the canyons and are also scattered across the plateau.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of the Owyhee River-Deep Creek WSA would not add a new ecosystem to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). However, it would add a landform not presently represented in the Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem. The landform is dominated by rhyolite uplands cut by deep canyons. This ecosystem is represented by three designated areas with 76,699 acres. There are 35 other BLM areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized on Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Dry Domain/Intermountain Sagebrush Province				
	<u>NATIONWIDE</u>			
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	3	76,699	136	4,359,340
	<u>IDAHO</u>			
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	1	12,997	35	949,916
	<u>NEVADA</u>			
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	1	32,407	29	1,273,919
	<u>CALIFORNIA</u>			
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	5	152,431
	<u>OREGON</u>			
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	67	1,983,074

**B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation
Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers**

The Owyhee River-Deep Creek WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3
**Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers**

Population Centers	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The Owyhee River-Deep Creek WSA would contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS. Regionally, the WSA would add a desert canyon system not found in designated wilderness and would help to balance opportunities to attain diverse wilderness experiences.

Manageability

The WSA is manageable in the long term to protect wilderness characteristics. There are no resource uses which could not be adequately controlled or would affect the manageability of the wilderness. The WSA is at least 23 miles from a paved highway. Vehicle access to the WSA boundaries is mostly along dirt roads which have received minimal construction and little or no maintenance. Much of the plateau within the WSA is relatively flat but many areas (particularly those close to the canyons) are strewn with rock rubble and impassable to vehicles.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the Bureau of Mines (BM) prepared a mineral assessment for 67,400 acres of the WSA in 1987. The assessment found that the area has low mineral potential for gold and that a small area in the southwest part of the WSA has low potential for silver. Geochemical analyses indicate anomalous concentrations of tin, cadmium and zinc in areas underlain by rhyolite. Favorable structures for mineralization of tin and associated elements are lacking, however, and the anomalous values most likely reflect the generally higher concentrations of these elements in the rhyolite. Although a diatomite deposit occurs adjacent to the WSA, diatomite occurrences within the area are small and impure; hence, the WSA is considered to have no potential for diatomite. Construction-grade sand and gravel occurrences are small, scattered and poorly accessible. Available geologic and geophysical data give no indication of the occurrence of favorable source of rocks or structural traps for oil and gas. Drilling in geologically more favorable areas 50 miles to the north and south have yielded only dry holes. Oil and natural gas leases cover parts of the area but no exploration has occurred. The WSA is considered to have no potential for oil and gas.

The Owyhee River-Deep Creek WSA contains no known mines or mining claims. A prospect for lapidary jasper, chalcedony and common opal adjacent to the area extends into the western portion of the WSA. The prospect yields materials mostly of interest to hobbyists.

In 1989, a 60-day public review of the USGS/BM mineral survey report for the WSA was conducted. During the review, comments were submitted which resulted in follow-up consideration by the USGS. Based on this reevaluation, the USGS upgraded the mineral potential rating from low to moderate for undiscovered resources of low-grade, epithermal hot-spring gold and silver deposits in the WSA.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative impact table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-16-49A (OWYHEE RIVER-DEEP CREEK)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION	NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE (NO WILDERNESS)	CANYONLANDS WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	WILDLIFE WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	<p>WILDERNESS (70,090 acres) No significant change in naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities on 70,090 acres from management actions. Slight improvement in naturalness and primitive recreation on plateau from improved grazing practices and prescribed burning. Localized enhancement in naturalness and primitive recreation from closure of 18 miles of road/ways to recreation use. However, use of vehicle routes for rangeland facility maintenance not to allow complete rehabilitation of routes. Localized short-term loss of naturalness and primitive/solitude recreation opportunities on 1,900 acres from oil/gas exploration activity on nonsuitable adjacent lands. Some localized reduction in naturalness from trampling of river campsite vegetation by recreation use. Recreation use per annum in 20 years to reach 406 user days for boating, 300 user days for backpacking and 265 user days for other activities. This use not to affect solitude/primitive recreation opportunities overall for naturalness away from river shoreline.</p> <p>NONWILDERNESS (4,250 acres) No significant change in naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities on 810 acres. Loss of naturalness and primitive recreation opportunities on 3,440 acres from drill seeding land treatments. Of this acreage, 2,800 acres also to have naturalness and solitude/primitive recreation opportunities reduced in short term by oil/gas exploration activities. Recreation use of 500 user days per annum in 20 years not to affect naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities.</p>	<p>NONWILDERNESS (72,720 acres) No significant change in naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities on 69,280 acres from management actions. Slight improvement in naturalness and primitive recreation opportunities on plateau from improved grazing practices and prescribed burning. Loss of naturalness on 3,440 acres from drill seeding land treatments. Of this acreage, 2,800 acres plus another 1,900 acres to have reduced naturalness and solitude/primitive recreation opportunities in short term from oil/gas exploration activities. Some localized reduction in naturalness from trampling of river campsite vegetation by recreation use. Recreation use per annum to reach 406 user days for boating, 180 user days for backpacking and 375 user days for other activities. This use not to affect solitude/primitive recreation opportunities overall nor naturalness away from river shoreline.</p>	<p>WILDERNESS (19,240 acres) No significant change in naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities on 19,240 acres from management actions. Localized enhancement in naturalness and primitive recreation opportunities from closure of 2 miles of ways to recreation use. Some localized reduction in naturalness from trampling of river campsite vegetation by recreation use. Recreation use per annum to reach 406 user days for boating and 100 user days for backpacking. Other uses to reach 175 user days. This use not to affect solitude/primitive recreation opportunities overall nor naturalness away from river corridor.</p> <p>NONWILDERNESS (53,480 acres) No significant change in naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities on 50,040 acres. Slight enhancement of naturalness and primitive recreation opportunities on plateau from improved grazing practices and prescribed burning. Loss of naturalness and primitive recreation opportunities on 3,440 acres from drill seeding land treatments. Of this acreage, 2,800 acres plus another 1,900 acres to have naturalness and primitive recreation opportunities reduced in short term by oil/gas exploration activities. Recreation use of 260 user days per annum (80 user days for backpacking and 180 user days for other activities) in 20 years not to affect naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities.</p>	<p>WILDERNESS (58,090 acres) No significant change in naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities on 58,090 acres from management actions. Slight enhancement in naturalness and primitive recreation opportunities on plateau from improved grazing practices and prescribed burning. Localized enhancement in naturalness and primitive recreation opportunities from closure of 14 miles of roads/ways to recreation use. However, use of vehicle routes for rangeland facility maintenance not to allow complete rehabilitation of routes. Localized short-term loss of naturalness and solitude/primitive recreation opportunities on 1,900 acres from oil/gas exploration activities. Some localized reduction in naturalness from trampling of river campsite vegetation by recreation use. Recreation use per annum in 20 years to reach 406 user days for boating, 180 user days for backpacking and 200 user days for other activities. This use not to affect solitude/primitive recreation opportunities overall nor naturalness away from river shoreline.</p> <p>NONWILDERNESS (15,310 acres) No significant change in naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities on 11,870 acres. Loss of naturalness and solitude/primitive recreation opportunities on 3,440 acres from drill seeding land treatments. Of this acreage, 2,800 acres also to have naturalness and solitude/primitive recreation opportunities reduced in short term by oil/gas exploration activities. Recreation use of 80 user days per annum in 20 years not to affect naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities.</p>	<p>WILDERNESS (73,340 acres) No significant change in naturalness or solitude/primitive recreation opportunities on 73,340 acres from management actions. Slight enhancement in naturalness and primitive recreation opportunities on plateau from improved grazing practices and prescribed burning. Localized enhancement in naturalness and primitive recreation opportunities from closure of 20 miles of roads/ways to recreation use. However, use of vehicle routes for rangeland facility maintenance not to allow complete rehabilitation of routes. Some localized reduction in naturalness from trampling of river campsite vegetation by recreation use. Recreation use per annum in 20 years to reach 406 user days for boating, 300 user days for backpacking and 280 user days for other uses. This use not to affect solitude/primitive recreation opportunities overall nor naturalness away from river shoreline.</p>

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION	NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE (NO WILDERNESS)	CANYONLANDS WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	WILDLIFE WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts to the Condition and Amount of Native Vegetation (Owyhee River-Deep Creek WSA)	<p>WILDERNESS Ecological condition of native plant communities improved on 57,495 acres and retained in good condition on 12,595 acres by grazing practices.</p> <p>NONWILDERNESS Ecological condition of native plant communities improved on 3,700 acres by grazing practices. Native plants displaced on 550 acres by seeding. Temporary displacement of vegetation on 10 acres from oil/gas exploration activities.</p>	<p>NONWILDERNESS Ecological condition of native plant communities improved on 59,550 acres and retained in good condition on 12,595 acres by grazing practices. Native plants displaced on 575 acres by seeding. Native vegetation temporarily displaced on 10 acres by oil/gas exploration activities.</p>	<p>WILDERNESS Ecological condition of native plant communities improved on 7,925 acres and retained in good condition on 11,315 acres by grazing practices.</p> <p>NONWILDERNESS Ecological condition of native plant communities improved on 52,905 acres by grazing practices. Native plants displaced on 575 acres by seeding. Temporary displacement of vegetation on 10 acres by oil/gas exploration activities.</p>	<p>WILDERNESS Ecological condition of native plant communities improved on 45,495 acres and retained in good condition on 12,595 acres by grazing practices.</p> <p>NONWILDERNESS Ecological condition of native plant communities improved on 14,735 acres. Native plants displaced on 575 acres by seeding. Temporary displacement of vegetation on 10 acres by oil/gas exploration activities.</p>	<p>WILDERNESS Ecological condition of native plant communities improved on 61,745 acres and retained in good condition on 12,595 acres by grazing practices.</p>
Impacts on Selected Wildlife Populations (Bighorn sheep, mule deer, antelope and sage grouse)	<p>WILDERNESS Increased recreation use to have minimal impact to wildlife populations. Only localized temporary wildlife displacement expected during periods of recreation activity. Road/way closures would reduce potential for wildlife disturbance from recreational vehicle use.</p> <p>NONWILDERNESS Increased forage availability and enhanced overall habitat condition resulting from improved grazing practices, reservoir maintenance, prescribed burning and seeding on plateau would increase wildlife populations. However, increased livestock number would compete with and reduce potential wildlife populations on non-suitable lands. Oil/gas exploration would cause only temporary displacement of wildlife populations on unsuitable lands.</p>	<p>NONWILDERNESS Increased recreation use to have minimal impact to wildlife populations. Only localized temporary wildlife displacement expected during periods of recreation activity. Increased forage availability and enhanced overall habitat condition resulting from improved grazing practices, reservoir maintenance, prescribed burning and seeding on plateau would increase wildlife populations. However, increased livestock numbers would compete with and reduce potential wildlife populations. Oil/gas exploration would cause only temporary displacement of wildlife populations.</p>	<p>WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Impacts the same as those of the No Action Alternative.</p>	<p>WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Impacts the same as those of the Proposed Action.</p>	<p>WILDERNESS Increased recreation use to have minimal impact to wildlife populations. Only localized temporary wildlife displacement expected during periods of recreation activity. Road/way closures would reduce potential for wildlife disturbance from recreational vehicle use. Increased forage availability and enhanced overall habitat condition resulting from improved grazing practices, reservoir maintenance and prescribed burning would increase wildlife populations.</p>
Impacts on Semi-Primitive Motorized Recreation Use	<p>WILDERNESS 18 miles of roads/ways closed to recreational vehicle use within wilderness. Semi-primitive motorized recreation use to reach 315 user days annually in 20 years for hunting, sightseeing, rockhounding or camping in association with WSA boundary roads.</p> <p>NONWILDERNESS Nonwilderness lands left open to vehicle access.</p>	<p>NONWILDERNESS All roads/ways to remain open for semi-primitive motorized recreation use. Use to reach 375 user days annually in 20 years for hunting, sightseeing, rockhounding or camping.</p>	<p>WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS 2 miles of interior ways within the canyon wilderness closed to semi-primitive motorized recreation use. Annual use in 20 years to reach 335 user days for hunting, sightseeing, rockhounding or camping along plateau roads/ways.</p>	<p>WILDERNESS 14 miles of interior roads/ways closed to recreational vehicle use within wilderness. Use to reach 180 user days per annum in 20 years for hunting, sightseeing, rockhounding or camping in association with WSA boundary roads.</p> <p>NONWILDERNESS Nonwilderness lands left open for vehicle access.</p>	<p>WILDERNESS 20 miles of interior roads/ways closed to recreational vehicle use. Semi-primitive motorized recreation use associated with WSA boundary roads to reach 280 user days in 20 years for hunting, sightseeing, rockhounding or camping.</p>

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION	NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE (NO WILDERNESS)	CANYONLANDS WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	WILDLIFE WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Livestock Use (Owyhee River-Deep Creek WSA)	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Annual livestock use to increase from 5,320 AUMs to 5,445 AUMs within 20 years on WSA lands.	NONWILDERNESS Annual livestock use to increase from 5,320 AUMs to 6,880 AUMs within 20 years on WSA lands.	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Annual livestock use to increase from 5,320 AUMs to 6,800 AUMs within 20 years on WSA lands.	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Annual livestock use to increase from 5,320 AUMs to 5,595 AUMs within 20 years on WSA lands.	NONWILDERNESS Annual livestock use to remain at 5,320 AUMs over next 20 years on WSA lands.
Impacts on Soil Erosion	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Road/way closures within wilderness to reduce asso- ciated soil erosion by 60 tons per year. Grazing practices combined with prescribed burning and seeding on 53,480 acres of plateau to reduce soil erosion by 5-15%. This, combined with small pro- jected increase in live- stock use to reduce soil erosion on plateau overall by 10%. Oil/gas explora- tion also to cause short- term soil erosion problem on 10 acres.	NONWILDERNESS Grazing practices combin- ed with prescribed burn- ing and seeding to reduce soil erosion by 5-15%. However, moderate pro- jected increases in live- stock use to result in 10% increase in soil erosion on plateau. Oil/gas ex- ploration also to produce short-term erosion prob- lem on 10 acres. Overall, soil erosion to increase by 0-5% on plateau.	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Way closure within wil- derness to reduce associ- ated soil erosion by 1.3 tons per year. Grazing practices combined with prescribed burning and seeding on plateau to re- duce soil erosion by 5- 15%. However, moderate projected increase in live- stock use to result in 10% increase in soil erosion on plateau. Oil/gas ex- ploration also to produce short-term erosion prob- lem on 10 acres. Overall soil erosion to increase by 0-5% on plateau.	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Road/way closures to re- duce associated soil ero- sion by 57 tons per year. Grazing practices combin- ed with prescribed burn- ing and seeding on pla- teau to reduce soil ero- sion by 5-15%. However, moderate projected in- crease in livestock use to result in 10% increase in soil erosion on plateau. Oil/gas exploration also to produce short-term erosion problem on 10 acres. Overall soil erosion to increase by 0-5% on plateau.	WILDERNESS Road/way closures to re- duce associated soil ero- sion by 78 tons per year. Grazing practices combin- ed with prescribed burn- ing and no projected in- crease in livestock use to result in 15% reduction in soil erosion on plateau.
Impacts on Water Quality	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Suspended sediment loads in WSA tributary streams reduced by 10%. Owyhee River and Deep Creek sediment loads not measurably affected.	NONWILDERNESS Suspended sediment loads in WSA tributary streams increased by as much as 5%. Owyhee River and Deep Creek sediment loads not mea- surably affected.	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Impacts the same as the No Action Alternative.	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Impacts the same as the No Action Alternative.	WILDERNESS Suspended sediment loads in WSA tributary streams reduced by as much as 15%. Owyhee River and Deep Creek sediment loads not mea- surably affected.
Impacts on Local Income and Jobs	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Income and employment data by individual WSA is not available. For Owyhee Canyonlands WSA com- plex as a whole, the Pro- posed Action would con- tribute to a .3% increase in income and a .3% in- crease in employment over the next 20 years from livestock and recrea- tional use of the WSAs in the 3-county area (Owyhee, Malheur and Elko Counties).	NONWILDERNESS Both income and employ- ment from WSA complex up .4% in 20 years.	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Both income and employ- ment from WSA complex up .4% in 20 years.	WILDERNESS/ NONWILDERNESS Both income and employ- ment from WSA complex up .3% in 20 years.	WILDERNESS From WSA complex, in- come up .2% and employ- ment up .3%.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Designation of 70,090 acres as wilderness would have no significant social or economic impacts on the local communities of Owyhee County. The impact to local income and jobs was an issue analyzed in the study of the Owyhee River-Deep Creek WSA.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. Certain comments received during the inventory process were considered in developing issues and various management alternatives. During the wilderness inventory for the Owyhee River-Deep Creek roadless unit, two public comments supported establishing a WSA and nine opposed it. Comments in support felt the area possessed the characteristics necessary to be considered for wilderness as well as supplemental values such as wildlife, scenic, vegetation and cultural resources. Those opposed to the WSA felt that the area did not have significant wilderness characteristics and that "multiple use" would be better served if the area was released from further wilderness review.

During the public review of the Owyhee and Bruneau Management Framework Plans, 51 out of 55 comments supported wilderness designation for the Owyhee Canyonlands WSA complex with no specific comments on the Owyhee River-Deep Creek WSA. Comments in support of wilderness designation were on the need for long-term protection of the high quality wilderness characteristics and special features of both the canyons and the plateau. Comments opposed to the wilderness designation addressed a perception that "multiple use" would provide greater public benefit, that wilderness was not multiple use, and that public benefits could be optimized more effectively through a wild river designation of the Owyhee River and with the further development of livestock and potential mineral/energy resources on the plateau and in the river's tributary canyons.

During the public comment period on the Draft Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness EIS, 448 written or oral comments supported all WSAs or portions of all WSAs in the Owyhee Canyonlands complex as wilderness, 46 comments opposed any wilderness in the WSA complex and 23 comments took no position. Those in support of wilderness for the Owyhee River-Deep Creek WSA were mostly in favor of designating the entire WSA as wilderness. Support for the entire WSA as wilderness was based upon a desire to see wildlife, vegetation and other natural resources protected in the long term. Opposition to any of the WSA becoming wilderness was based upon a desire for improved livestock management opportunities, the need for continued use of the area for motorized recreation and the need to have further opportunities for the exploration and possible development of mineral and energy resources.

Eleven government agencies commented on this WSA. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Idaho Department of Fish and Game supported wilderness designation to protect wildlife habitat; the Bonneville Power Administration did not object to wilderness; the Department of the Air Force supported wilderness if no significant restrictions were placed on military overflights; and the Idaho Air National Guard opposed wilderness because of conflicts with its tactical flight training mission. The Bureau of Reclamation had no objection to wilderness designation while the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes stated the wilderness would prohibit construction of irrigation dams. The Owyhee County Commissioners opposed wilderness designation but supported national wild river designation for the Owyhee River. The Federal Aviation Agency, Soil Conservation Service and Environmental Protection Agency took no position.

Subsequent to the May 31, 1984, conclusion of the public comment period for the Draft Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness EIS, but prior to the completion of the Final EIS, 78 written comments were received. One of the comments opposed any wilderness designation in the WSA complex, one took no position and 76 supported wilderness designation. Of the wilderness advocates, 61 supported designating the entire Owyhee River-Deep Creek WSA as wilderness. Most of this wilderness support was in response to a flyer sent out by the Committee for Idaho's High Desert and to an "alert" in the Sierra Club magazine.

**APPENDIX I -- OWYHEE RIVER-DEEP CREEK WSA
Estimated Costs of Acquisition of Nonfederal Holdings
Within Areas Recommended for Designation(1)**

Legal Description	Total Acreage	Number of Owners	Type of Ownership by Estate	Type of Ownership by Estate	Presently Proposed for Acquisition	Preferred Method of Acquisition	Estimated Cost of Acquisition	Estimated Cost of Acquisition
			Surface Estate	Subsurface Estate			Land Costs (in \$)	Processing Costs (in \$)
Parcel No. 1 T. 13 S.R. 5 W. Sec. 25 SE1/4	160	1	Private	Private	Yes	Exchange	N/A	4,500

(1)The estimated costs listed in this appendix in no way represent a formal appraised value of the land or mineral estate but are rough estimates based on sales or exchanges of lands or mineral estates with similar characteristics to those included in the WSA. The estimates are for purposes of establishing a range of potential costs to the government of acquiring nonfederal holdings and in no way represent an offer to purchase or exchange at the cost estimate included in this appendix.